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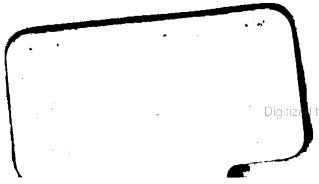
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COOPERS-HILL.

A

POEM,

Written by the Honourable

Sir *JOHN DENHAM*,

Knight of the *Bath*.

LONDON:

Printed and Sold by *H. Hills*, in *Black-Fryers*, near the Water-side, 1709.

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TO THE KING.

SIR,

AFter the delivery of Your Royal Father's Person into the hands of the Army, I undertaking to the Queen Mother, that I would find some means to get access to him she was pleased to send me, and by the help of Hugh Peters *I got my admittance, and coming well instructed from the Queen (his Majesty having been long kept in the dark) he was pleased to discourse very freely with me of the whole state of his Affairs: But, Sir, I will not launch into a History, instead of an Epistle. One morning waiting on him at* Caulsham, *smiling upon me, he said he could tell me some News of my self, which was, that he had seen some Verses of mine the Evening before (being those to Sir* Richard Fanshaw) *and asking me when I made them, I told him two or three years since; he was pleased to say, that having never seen them before, He was afraid I had written them since my return into* England, *and though he liked them well, He would advise me to write no more, alledging, that when men are young, and have little else to do, they might vent the overflowings of their Fancy that way; but when they were thought fit for more serious Employments, if they still persisted in that course, it would look as if they minded not the way to any better.*

Whereupon I stood corrected as long as I had the honour to wait upon him, and at his departure from Hampton Court, *he was pleased to command me to stay privately at* London, *to send to him and receive from him all his Letters from and to all his Correspondents at home and abroad, and I was furnish'd with nine several Cyphers in order to it: Which trust I performed with great safety, to the persons with whom we corresponded; but about nine months after being discovered by their knowledge of Mr.* Cowley's *Hand I happily escaped both for my self, and those that held correspondance with me; that time was too hot and busie for such idle speculations, but after I had the good fortune to wast upon Your Majesty in* Holland *and* France, *You were pleased sometimes to give me Arguments to divert and put off the evil hours of our Banishment, which now and then fell not short of Your Majesty's expectation.*

After, when Your Majesty departing from St. Germans *to* Jersy, *was pleased freely (without my asking) to confer upon me that place wherein I have now the honour to serve You, I then gave over Poetical Lines,*

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and made it my business to draw such others as might be more serviceable to Your Majesty, and I hope more lasting. Since that time I never disobeyed my old Master's Commands till this Summer at the Wells, my Retirement there tempting me to divert those melancholy Thoughts, which the new Apperitions of Foreign Invasion, and Domestick Discontent gave us: But these Clouds being now happily blown over, and our Sun clearly shining out again, I have recovered the Relapse. it being suspected that it would have proved the Epidemical Disease of Age, which is apt to fall back into the Follies in Youth; yet Socrates, Aristotle *and* Cato *did the same, and* Scaliger *saith that Fragment of* Aristotle *was beyond any thing that* Pindar *or* Homer *ever wrote. I will not call this a Dedication, for those Epistles are commonly greater Absurdities than any that come after: For what Author can reasonably believe, that fixing the great Name of some eminent Patron in the Forehead of his Book can charm away Censure, and that the first Leaf should be a Curtain to draw over and hide all the deformities that stand behind it? Neither have I any need of such shifts, for most of the Parts of this Body have already had your Majesty's View, and having past the Test of so clear and sharp sighted a Judgment, which has as good a Title to give Law in Matters of this Nature as in any other, they who shall presume to dissent from Your Majesty, will do more wrong to their own Judgment, than their Judgment can do to me. And for those latter Parts which have not yet received your Majesty's favourable Aspect, if they who have seen them do not flatter me, (for I dare not trust my own Judgment) they will make it appear, that it is not with me as with most of Mankind, who never forsake their Darling Vices, till their Vices forsake them; and that this Divorce was not* Frigiditatis causâ, *but an Act of Choice, and not of Necessity. Therefore, Sir, I shall only call it an humble Petition, That Your Majesty will please to pardon this new Amour to my old Mistress, and my Disobedience to his Commands, to whose Memory I look upon with great Reverence and Devotion, and making a serious Reflection upon that wise Advice, it carries much greater weight with it now than when it was given; for when Age and Experience has so ripened Man's Discretion as to make it fit for use, either in private or publick Affairs, nothing blasts and corrupts the Fruit of it so much as the empty, airy Reputation of being* nimis Poeta; *and therefore I shall take my leave of the Muses, as two of my Predecessors did, saying,*

Splendidis longum vale dico nugis,
Hic versus & cætera ludiera pono.

Your Majesty's most faithful
and loyal Subject, and most
dutiful and devoted Servant,

JO. DENHAM.

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COOPERS-HILL.

SURE there are Poets which did never dream
Upon *Parnaſſus*, nor did taſte the Stream
Of *Helicon*; we therefore may ſuppoſe
Thoſe made not Poets, but the Poet thoſe.
And as Courts make not Kings, but Kings the Court,
So where the Muſes and their Train reſort,
Parnaſſus ſtands; if I can be to thee
A Poet, thou *Parnaſſus* art to me.
Nor wonder, if (advantag'd in my Flight,
By taking Wing from thy Auſpicious Height)
Through untrac'd Ways, and airy Paths I fly,
More boundleſs in my Fancy than my Eye:
My Eye, which ſwift as Thought contracts the Space
That lies between, and firſt ſalutes the Place
Crown'd with that ſacred Pile, ſo vaſt, ſo high,
That whether 'tis part of Earth, or Sky,
Uncertain ſeems, and may be thought a proud
Aſpiring Mountain, or deſcending Cloud:
Paul's the late Theme of ſuch a Muſe whoſe Flight *M. W.*
His bravely reach'd and ſoar'd above thy Height;
Now ſhalt thou ſtand, though Sword, or Time, or Fire,
Or Zeal more fierce than they, thy Fall conſpire,
Secure, whilſt thee the beſt of Poets ſings,
Preſerv'd from Ruin by the beſt of Kings.

Under

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Under his proud ſurvey the City lies,
And like a miſt beneath a Hill doth riſe;
Whoſe ſtate and wealth the buſineſs and the Crowd,
Seems, at this diſtance but a darker Cloud:
And is to him who rightly things eſteems,
No other in effect than what it ſeems;
Where, with like haſte, tho' ſeveral ways, they run,
Some to undo, and ſome to be undone;
While Luxury and Wealth, like War and Peace,
Are each the others ruine, and increaſe;
As Rivers Loſt in Seas ſome ſecret Vein
Thence re-conveys there to be loſt again.
O happineſs of ſweet retir'd content!
To be at once ſecure, and innocent.
Windſor the next (where *Mars* with *Venus* dwells, *Windſor.*
Beauty with ſtrength) above the Vally ſwells.
Into my eye, and doth it ſelf preſent
With ſuch an eaſie and unforc't aſcent,
That no ſtupendious precipice denies
Acceſs, no horror turns away our eyes:
But ſuch a Riſe as doth at once invite
A pleaſure and a reverence from the ſight.
Thy mighty Maſter's Emblem, in whoſe Face
State Meekneſs, heightned with Majeſtick Grace;
Such ſeems the gentle Height, made only proud
To be the Baſis of that pompous load,
Than which, a nobler weight no Mountain bears,
But *Atlas* only that ſupports the Sphears.

When

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When Nature's hand this ground did thus advance,
'Twas guided by a wiſer power than Chance;
Mark'd out for ſuch a uſe, as if 'twere meant
T' invite the Builder, and his choice prevent.
Nor can we call it choice, when what we chuſe,
Folly, or Blindneſs only could refuſe.
A Crown of ſuch Majeſtick Tow'rs doth grace
The God's great Mother, when her heavenly race
Do homage to her, yet ſhe cannot boaſt
Amongſt that numerous, and Celeſtial Hoſt,
More *Hero's* than can *Windſor*, nor doth Fame's
Immortal Book record more noble Names.
Not to look back ſo far, to whom this Iſle
Owes the firſt Glory of ſo brave a Pile,
Whether to *Cæſar*, *Albanact*, or *Brute*,
The Britiſh *Arthur*, or the Daniſh *Knute*,
(Though this of old no leſs conteſt did move,
Than when for *Homer's* Birth ſeven Cities ſtrove)
Like him in Birth, thou ſhoul'dſt be like in Fame,
(As thine his Fate, if mine had been his Flame)
But whoſoe'er it was, Nature deſign'd
Firſt a brave place, and then as brave a mind.
Not to recount thoſe ſeveral Kings, to whom
It gave a Cradle, or to whom a Tomb,
But the (great * *Edward*) and thy greater Son,
(The Lillies which his Father wore, he won)
And thy † *Bellona*, who the Conſert came
Not only to thy Bed, but to thy Fame,

* *Edward* Third, and the *Black Prince*. † Queen *Philipa*.

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* She to the Triumph led one Captive King,
And brought that Son, which did the ſecond bring
Then didſt thou found that Order (whether Love
Or Victory thy Royal Thoughts did move)
Each was a Noble Cauſe, and nothing leſs
Than the Deſign, has been the great Succeſs:
Which Foreign Kings and Emperors eſteem
The ſecond Honour to their Diadem.
Had thy great Deſtiny but giv'n the Skill,
To know, as well as Power to act her Will,
That from thoſe Kings, who then thy Captives were,
In After-time ſhould ſpring a Royal Pair,
Who ſhould poſſeſs all that thy mighty Power,
Or thy Deſires more mighty, did devour;
To whom their better Fate reſerves whate'er
The Victor hopes for, or the Vanquiſh'd fear;
That Blood, which thou and thy Great Granſire ſhed,
And all that ſince theſe Siſter Nations bled,
Had been unſpilt, had happy *Edward* known
That all the Blood he ſpilt, had been his own.
When he that Patron choſe, in whom are injoy'd
Souldier and Martyr, and his Arm's confin'd
Within the Azure Circle, he did ſeem
But to foretel and propheſie of him,
Who to his Realms that Azure Roun hath joyn'd,
Which Nature for their Bound at firſt deſign'd.
That Bound, which to the World's extreameſt ends,
Endleſs it ſelf, its Liquid Arms extends;

* *The Kings of* France *and* Scotland.

Nor

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Nor doth he need thoſe Emblems which we Paint,
But is himſelf the Souldier and the Saint.
Here ſhould my Wonder dwell, and here my Praiſe,
But my fixt Thoughts my wandring Eye betrays;
Viewing a Neighbouring Hill, whoſe Top of late
A Chappel crown'd, till in the common Fate,
The adjoyding Abbey fell: (May no ſuch Storm
Fall on our Times, where Ruin muſt reform.)
Tell me (my Muſe) what monſtrous dire Offence,
What Crime could any Chriſtian King incenſe
To ſuch a Rage? Was't Luxury, or Luſt?
Was he ſo Temperate, ſo Chaſte, ſo Juſt?
Were theſe their Crimes? They were his own much more:
But Wealth is Crime enough to him that's poor;
Who having ſpent the Treaſures of his Crown,
Condemns their Luxury to feed his own.
And yet this Act, to varniſh o'er the Shame
Of Sacriledge, muſt bear Devotion's Name.
No Crime ſo bold, but would be underſtood
A real, or at leaſt a ſeeming good;
Who fears not to do ill, yet fears the Name,
And free from Conſcience is a Slave to Fame.
Thus he the Church at once protects, and ſpoils:
But Princes Swords are ſharper than their ſtiles.
And thus to th'Ages paſt he makes amends,
Their Charity deſtroys, their Faith defends.
Then did Religion in a lazy Cell,
In empty, airy Contemplations dwell;

And

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And like the Block, unmoved lay: but ours,
As much to active, like the Stork devours.
Is there no temperate Region can be known,
Betwixt their Frigid, and our Torrid Zone?
Could we not wake from that Lethargick Dream,
But to be reſtleſs in a worſe Extream?
And for that Lethargy was there no Cure,
But to be caſt into a Calenture?
Can knowledge have no bound, but muſt advance
So far, to make us wiſh for ignorance?
And rather in the dark to grope our way,
Than led by a falſe Guide to erre by day?
Who ſees theſe diſmal Heaps, but would demand
What barbarous Invader ſack'd the Land?
But when he hears, no Goth, no Turk did bring
This deſolation, but a Chriſtian King;
When nothing, but the Name of Zeal, appears
'Twixt our beſt actions, and the worſt of theirs,
What does he think our Sacrilege would ſpare,
When ſuch th' effects of our Devotion are?
Parting from thence 'twixt anger ſhame and fear,
Thoſe for what's paſt, and this for what's too near:
My eye deſcending from the Hill, ſurveys
Where *Thames* amongſt the wanton Vallies ſtrays.
Thames, the moſt lov'd of all the Ocean Sons, *Thames.*
By his old Sire to his embraces runs,
Haſting to pay his tribute to the Sea,
Like mortal life to meet Eternity.

Though

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Though with thoſe ſtreams he no reſemblance hold,
Whoſe foam is Amber, and their Gravel Gold;
His genuine, and leſs guilty wealth t' explore,
Search not his bottom, but ſurvey his ſhore;
O're which he kindly ſpreads his ſpacious wing:
And hatches plenty for th' enſuing Spring.
Nor then deſtroys it with too fond a ſtay,
Like Mothers which their Infants overlay:
Nor with a ſudden and impetuous wave,
Like profuſe Kings, reſums the wealth he gave;
No unexpected inundations ſpoil
The Mowers hopes, nor mock the Plowmans toyl:
But Godlike his unwearied Bounty flows;
Firſt loves to do, than loves the Good he does:
Nor are his Bleſſings to his banks confin'd,
But free, and common, as the Sea or Wind;
When he to boaſt or to diſperſe his ſtores
Full of the tributes of his grateful ſhores,
Viſits the World, and in his flying towers
Brings home to us, and makes both *Indies* ours;
Finds wealth where 'tis, beſtows it where it wants,
Cities in deſarts, Woods in Cities plants.
So that to us no thing, no place is ſtrange,
While his fair boſom is the World's exchange.
O could I flow like thee, and make thy ſtream
My great example, as it is my theme!
Though deep, yet clear, though gentle, yet not dull,
Strong without rage, without o're-flowing full.

Heaven

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Heaven her *Eridanus* no more ſhall boaſt,
Whoſe Fame in thine, like leſſer Currents loſt;
Thy nobler Streams ſhall viſit *Jove*'s Aboads,
To ſhine among the Stars, and bathe the Gods:
Here Nature, whether more intent to pleaſe *The Forreſt.*
Us, or her ſelf with ſtrange Varieties;
(For Things of Wonder give no leſs Delight
To the wiſe Makers, than Beholder's Sight.
Though theſe Delights from ſeveral Cauſes wove,
For ſo our Children, thus our Friends we love)
Wiſely ſhe knew the Harmony of Things,
As well as that of Sounds, from Diſcords ſprings.
Such was the Diſcord, which did firſt diſperſe
Form, Order, Beauty, through the Univerſe;
While Drineſs, Moiſture, Coldneſs, Heat reſiſts,
All that we have, and that we have ſubſiſts.
While the ſteep horrid Roughneſs of the Wood
Strive with the gentle Calmneſs of the Flood.
Such huge Extreams when Nature doth unite,
Wonder from thence reſults, from thence Delight;
The Stream is ſo tranſparent, pure and clear, *Narciſſus.*
That had the ſelf-enamour'd Youth gaz'd here,
So fatally deceiv'd he had not been,
While he the Bottom, not his Face had ſeen.
But his proud Head the airy Mountain hides
Among the Clouds; his Shoulders, and his Sides
A ſhady Mantle clothes; his curled Brows
Frown on the gentle Stream, which calmly flows,

While

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While Winds and Storms his lofty Forehead beat
The common Fate of all that's High or Great.
Low at his Foot a ſpacious Plain is plac'd,
Between the Mountain and the Stream embrac'd:
Which Shade and Shelter from the Hill derives,
While the kind River, Wealth and Beauty gives;
And in the mixture of all theſe appears
Variety, which all the reſt indears.
This Scene, had ſome bold *Greek*, or *Britiſh* Bard
Beheld of old, what Stories had we heard
Of Fairies, Satyrs, and the Nymphs, their Dames,
Their Feaſts, their Revels, and their Amorous Flames?
'Tis ſtill the ſame, altho' their airy Shape,
All but a quick Poetick Sight eſcape.
There *Faunus* and *Silvanus* keep their Courts;
And thither all the horned Hoaſt reſorts,
To graze the ranker Mead, that noble Heard
On whoſe ſublime and ſhady Fronts is rear'd
Nature's great Maſter-Piece; to ſhew how ſoon
Great things are made, but ſooner are undone.
Here have I ſeen the King, when great Affairs
Gave leave to ſlacken, and unbend his Cares,
Attended to the Chaſe by all the Flower
Of Youth, whoſe Hopes a nobler Prey devour:
Pleaſure with Praiſe, and Danger, they would buy,
And wiſh a Foe that would not only fly.
The Stag now conſcious of his fatal Growth,
At once indulgent to his Fear and Sloth,
To ſome dark Covert his Retreat had made,
Where no Man's Eye, nor Heaven's ſhould invade
His ſoft Repoſe; when th' unexpected Sound
Of Dogs and Men, his wakeful Ear doth wound:
Rouz'd with the Noiſe, he ſcarce believes his Ear;
Willing to think th' Illuſions of his Fear
had given this falſe Alarm, but ſtrait his View
Confirms, that more than all he fears is true;

Betray'd

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Betray'd in all his Strengths, the Wood beſet,
All Inſtruments, all Arts of Ruine met
He calls to mind his Strength, and then his Speed,
His winged Heels, and then his Armed Head;
With theſe t' avoid, with that his Fate to meet:
But fear prevails, and bids him truſt his Feet.
So faſt he flies, that his reviewing eye
Has loſt the Chaſers, and his ear the Cry:
Exulting, till he finds, their Nobler Senſe
Their diſproportion'd Speed does recompenſe.
Then curſes his conſpiring Feet, who ſcent
Betrays that ſafety, which their ſwiftneſs lent.
Then tries his Friends, among the baſer heard,
Where he ſo lately was obey'd, and fear'd,
His ſafety ſeeks: the Herd, unkindly wiſe,
Or Chaſes him from thence, or from him flies.
Like a declining Stateſman, left forlorn
To his Friends pity, and Purſuers ſcorn;
With ſhame remembers, while himſelf was one
Of the ſame Herd, himſelf the ſame had done.
Thence to the Coverts, and the conſcious Groves,
The Scenes of his paſt Triumphs, and his Loves;
Sadly ſurveying where he rang'd alone
Prince of the Soil, and all the Herd his own;
And like a bold Knight Errant did proclaim
Combat to all, and bore away the Dame;
And taught the Woods to Echo to the Stream
His dreadful Challenge, and his claſhing Beam;
Yet fairly now declines the fatal ſtrife;
So much his Love was dearer than his Life.
Now every Leaf, and every moving Breath
Preſents a Foe, and every Foe a Death.
Wearied, forſaken, and purſu'd, at laſt
All ſafety in deſpair of ſafety plac'd,
Courage he thence reſumes, reſolv'd to bear
All their Aſſaults, ſince 'tis in vain to fear.

And

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And now too late he wiſhes for the fight,
That ſtrength he waſted in ignoble flight:
But when he ſees the eager Chaſe renew'd
Himſelf by Dogs, the Dogs by Men purſu'd:
He ſtrait revokes his bold reſolve, and more
Repents his courage, than his fear before;
Finds that uncertain ways unſafeſt are,
And Doubt a greater miſchief than Deſpair.
Then to the Stream, when neither Friends, nor Force,
Nor ſpeed, nor Art avail, he ſhaps his courſe;
Thinks not their rage ſo deſperate t' aſſay
An Element more mercileſs than they.
But fearleſs they purſue, nor can the Flood
Quench their dire Thirſt; alas, they thirſt for Blood.
So toward a Ship the oarefin'd Gallies ply,
Which wanting Sea to ride, or Wind to fly,
Stands but to fall reveng'd on thoſe that dare
Tempt the laſt fury of extream Deſpair.
So fares the Stag among the enrag'd Hounds,
Repels their force, and wounds returns for wounds
And as a Hero, whom his baſer Foes
In Troops ſurrounds, now theſe aſſails, now thoſe,
Though Prodigal of Life, diſdains to dye
By common hands; but if he can deſcry
Some nobler Foes approach, to him he calls,
And begs his Fate, and then contented falls.
So when the King a mortal Shaft lets flye
From his unerring hand, then glad to dye,
Proud of the wound, to it reſigns his Blood,
And ſtains the Cryſtal with a purple Flood.
This a more innocent and happy Chaſe,
Than when of old, but in the ſelf-ſame place,
* Fair Liberty purſu'd, and meant a Prey
To lawleſs power, here turn'd, and ſtood at Bay.

* *Runny Mead, where that Great Charter was firſt ſealed.*

When

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When in that Remedy all hope was plac'd,
Which was, or ſhould have been at leaſt, the laſt.
Here was that Charter ſeal'd, wherein the †Crown
All marks of Arbitrary Power lays down:
Tyrant and Slave, thoſe Names of hate and fear,
The happier Style of King and Subject bear:
Happy when both to the ſame Center move,
When Kings give Liberty, and Subjects Love.
Therefore not long in Force this Charter ſtood;
Wanting that Seal, it muſt be ſeal'd in Blood.
The Subjects arm'd, the more their Princes gave,
Th' advantage only took the more to crave.
Till King's by giving, gave themſelves away,
And even that Power that ſhould deny, betray.
"Who gives conſtrain'd, but his own Fear reviles,
"Not thank'd, but ſcorn'd; nor are thy Gifts, but Spoils.
Thus Kings, by graſping more than they could hold,
Firſt made their Subjects by Oppreſſion bold:
And popular Sway, by forcing Kings to give
More than was fit for Subjects to receive,
Ran to the ſame Extreams; and one Exceſs
Made both, by ſtriving to be greater, leſs.
When a calm River rais'd with ſudden Rains,
Or Snows diſſolv'd, o'erflows the adjoyning Plains,
The Husbandmen with high-rais'd Banks ſecure
Their greedy Hopes, and this he can endure;
But if with Bays and Dams, they ſtrive to force
His Chanel to a new or narrow Courſe;
No longer then within his Banks he dwells,
Firſt to a Torrent, then a Deluge ſwells:
Stronger and Fiercer! by Reſtraint he roars,
And knows no Bound, but makes his Powers his Shores.

† *Magna Charta.*

FINIS.

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